

MEMORANDUM

To: Ohio Democratic Party (ODP) Executive Committee
Fr: David Pepper, Chair, ODP Vetting Committee
Da: February 28, 18
Re: Gubernatorial Vetting Committee Report

In 2017, the ODP tasked a Gubernatorial Candidate Vetting Committee with developing and executing an extensive vetting process for candidates seeking the Democratic nomination for Governor of Ohio.

At the direction of the committee, I, along with ODP staff and in-house and outside counsel, conducted thorough background checks on the candidates who requested to undergo the vetting process*:

- ◆ Richard Cordray
- ◆ Dennis Kucinich
- ◆ Bill O'Neill
- ◆ Connie Pillich
- ◆ Betty Sutton
- ◆ Joe Schiavoni
- ◆ Nan Whaley

**Candidate Jon Heavey requested to undergo the vetting process but did not meet the threshold for signatures. He is currently challenging that decision.*

This was followed by an in-person interview of each candidate with the entire vetting committee.

As a reminder, the purpose of the committee was not to pass judgement on any individual candidate's political views; that will be left to the voters to sort out. The purpose of the committee was to assess the basic viability of each candidate's candidacy and determine if any issue in the candidate's background—whether previously made public or not—risked that candidate's viability and the viability of the entire ticket should he or she become the Democratic nominee for Governor.

With one exception, all candidates satisfied the committee that there was not an issue or pattern of issues that risked the basic viability of their candidacy or of the Democratic ticket should they emerge as the Democratic nominee.

Candidate O'Neill exhibited a pattern of financial and ethical challenges over a number of years, as a private citizen, a candidate and an elected official. Moreover, O'Neill has, on more than one occasion, posted highly inflammatory and insensitive remarks on social media. Together, these challenges left the committee deeply concerned about the viability of his candidacy should he emerge as the Democratic nominee.